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Swat That Moth-or Look Out!

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Swat That Moth—or Look Out!

By C. H. Richardson, Zool.

Madame Stalks an Enemy

THE clothes moth, the devil of the clothes closet, is today finding it harder and harder to make an adequate living off my lady's wardrobe. "Anti" this and that and a hundred kinds of powders, gases, tablets and liquids are making life unsafe for him, but still every year even the most metriculous of housewives is bound to one day unexpectedly run across the tell-tale holes and powdery indications of his presence. To know how to deal with this marauder, if encountered, and how to constantly guard against his return is Madame's surest key to wardrobe happinesses.

Clothes moths cause much damage to materials of animal origin, attacking all types of woolen goods, furs, hair, feathers and the like. The results of their destructive work are especially noticeable in woolen clothing, upholstered furniture, carpets, rugs, and in the felts in pianos.

There are two species of clothes moths in Iowa, the webbing clothes moth and the case-making clothes moth. The webbing clothes moth is the most abundant and most of the damage reported is due to this species.

THE adult webbing clothes moth is a small, pale buff "miller," which avoids bright daylight, but may often be seen flying in dimly-lighted rooms and closets. Although most commonly seen in spring and summer, individuals may be found in heated dwellings at any time of the year. The moths do not feed at all, and live hardly more than a month, during which time they hunt out and lay their minute oval white eggs in the material upon which the caterpillars will feed. As many as 150 eggs may be laid by a single moth.

The eggs hatch in 7 to 10 days and the small caterpillars, shunning the light, work their way along the folds and meshes of the material to a place of seclusion. Here they feed upon the hair or other animal material, cutting holes into garments and spinning webs as they go. The caterpillars may reach full growth in a few weeks or the growth

period may last as long as two years depending upon the quality of the food and the temperature and air moisture. After full growth is reached the caterpillars transform to pupae or chrysalids, within silken cases.

To defeat the enemy even before he attacks is the best policy. Woolen clothing and other materials of animal origin should not be left undisturbed in closets, cupboards or trunks for long periods, particularly during the summer months, unless measures have been taken to protect them from moth injury. Such articles should be thoroughly brushed inside and out (under the collars of woolen garments) and placed in the strong sunlight for several hours before being laid

pound for a bag or large pasteboard box. As both these substances vaporize at the ordinary room temperature, it is important to use a quantity sufficient to last through the summer, when moths are most abundant. Naphthalene is more lasting because a higher temperature is required to vaporize it, but it tends to cling in garments, leaving an odor unpleasant to some people. Paradichlorobenzene has a less objectionable odor, but vaporizes more rapidly.

IF clothing has become infested with moths it is advisable to fumigate garments with carbon disulfide. For this purpose about three fluid ounces of carbon disulfide are required for a container the size of an ordinary trunk, the fluid being placed in a saucer on top of garments in the trunk. The trunk should not be opened for forty-eight hours and the air temperature at the time of fumigation should be 70 degrees F. or higher. As carbon disulfide is about as explosive as gasoline, it is necessary to use it only in the absence of flames, sparks or temperatures near the ignition point.

Moths are difficult to eradicate from upholstered furniture, but several methods are available. Perhaps the simplest of these is to place the furniture out of doors for several hours when

the temperature is below zero F., after which all stages of the insect are destroyed. Or the furniture may be placed in a room in which the temperature is raised to between 130 and 140 degrees F., and held in that range for six hours. Fumigation with carbon disulfide, hydrocyanic acid gas or some other suitable fumigant is also very effective, but gen-

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"M-m-m Lunch!"

away. A well-made chest or tight trunk is a suitable place for storage. One may also use cotton or paper bags or pasteboard boxes sealed with paper strips.

Whatever type of container is used, one should always scatter flake naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene among the materials stored in the container. One pound of either of these substances is sufficient for an ordinary trunk and ½

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and suggestions as to your feeling in this matter. No organization can prosper unless it has a reasonable and real reason for being. Let us put our shoulders to the wheel and make our State Home Economics Association a live, vital and necessary thing for the women of Iowa.

Sincerely yours,

Lula E. Smith.

Swat That Moth!

(Continued from page 1)

erally best done by someone familiar with the procedure. Another method is to saturate the upholstery with gasoline, using only the colorless product free from anti-knock compounds. During and after treatment the furniture should be placed in the open air away from fire.

Piano felting may be protected by hanging a cloth bag which contains one pound of either naphthalene or paradichlorobenzene inside the piano case. The piano should be kept closed when not in use.

It is very important to clean closets thoroughly with a vacuum cleaner, giving attention to corners and cracks along the base boards. Spray liberally with one of the household pyrethrum sprays all cracks in floors and around base boards, in fact, in all crevices where lint has collected. Carpets should occasionally be cleaned with a vacuum cleaner on the under as well as the upper side.

If the house is to be vacated for several months rugs and carpets should be liberally coated with flake naphthalene and rolled up tightly, then securely wrapped in paper.

Sometimes the entire building becomes infested with moths. In such cases fumigation of all the rooms and halls with hydrocyanic acid gas is necessary. As this substance is highly poisonous and dangerous in the hands of inexperienced persons, the housekeeper should call in an experienced operator to do this work.

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